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THE ICONOGRAPHY OF STOURHEAD

Malcolm Kelsall

KENNETH WOODBRIDGE first proposed that there is a relation between the *Aeneid* and the emblems of Henry Hoare's garden at Stourhead.¹ Reiteration has given the interpretation authority and elaborated suggestion has become orthodoxy. Yet at no stage has the enquiry been pursued in the context of how the eighteenth-century mind interpreted the *Aeneid*, and concentration upon a supposed sequence of Virgilian allusions in a circuit walk has led to the suppression of the clear visual counterpoint between the classical vistas within the garden and the Christian and Gothic images without. Misinterpretation of Virgil and restriction of the range of association have limited and distorted the iconographical structure. These issues will be reconsidered.

In simplified summary: the now generally accepted argument began with a handful of facts. A major visual similarity exists between Claude's *Coast View of Delos with Aeneas*

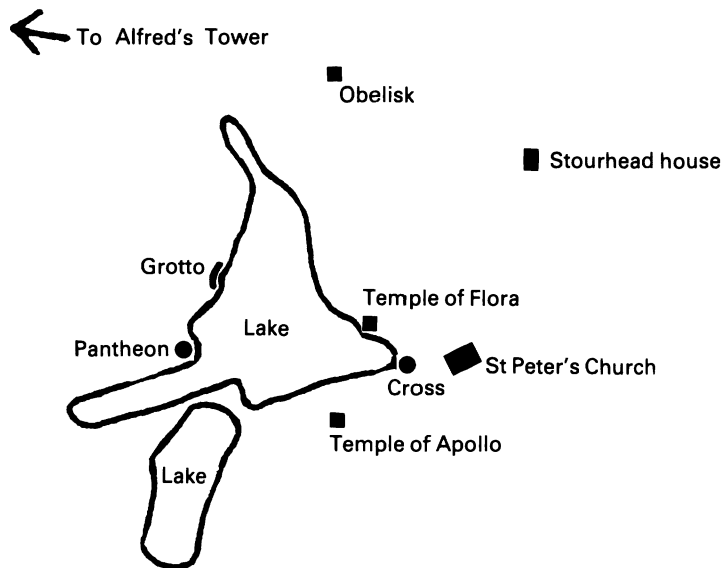


FIG. 1. Sketch map of the lake walk at Stourhead

Kenneth Woodbridge generously drew my attention to his revised version of *The Stourhead Landscape*, The National Trust, London 1982, which appeared while this article was being written. His judgement on the Virgilian programme now is 'not to say that the features were planned with an allegorical intention; but at some

time between 1744 and 1751 the association with the *Aeneid* was made' (pp. 20–21). He also now states Walpole to have been mistaken in associating the inscription for the River God with Virgil (p. 53).

¹ 'Henry Hoare's Paradise', *Art Bulletin*, XLVII, 1965, pp. 83–116.

(Pl. 18a) and the first vista perceived by the visitor to the garden (Pl. 18b); bridge to the left, temple of Flora/Ceres to the right (cf. Pl. 19b), Pantheon/Temple of Hercules across the lake.² When the visitor proceeds to the right there is found upon the temple of Flora/Ceres (Pl. 19b) a clear Virgilian allusion in the motto *Procul, o procul este profani* (vi, 258). A little further on, over the original pedimented entrance to the next ornament, a grotto, the eighteenth-century visitor would have found another Virgilian quotation: *Intus aquae dulces, vivoque sedilia saxo, Nympharum domus* (1, 171–72). The grotto, it is claimed, is ‘the Sousterrain’ Henry Hoare referred to in a letter late in the development of the garden, 23 December 1765, in which he quoted *Aeneid* vi again: ‘facilis descensus Averno’ (vi, 126). Thus it is claimed the grotto suggests the underworld visited by Aeneas, from which the visitor, like him, comes to a representation of Rome itself, at Stourhead embodied in the Pantheon, and the ultimate ornament upon the walk, the temple of Apollo on a high hill (Pl. 19c).

These analogies have provided a basis for positing further Virgilian allusions, in which the lake becomes symbolically Avernus; the river god in the grotto, Father Tiber of *Aeneid* viii (Pl. 20a); and the Statue of Hercules in the Pantheon as representative of the site of Rome, for there he was worshipped as a god (Pl. 20b). The culmination of the circuit in the temple of Apollo would join Aeneas with the Augustan Palatine, though the connection has not been developed. A walk around the garden provides a parallel, therefore, to the journeys of Aeneas and the founding of Rome.

Simple versions of this theme were offered by Edward Malins in 1966 and Christopher Hussey in 1967,³ both closely following Woodbridge who reworked his own continuing interpretations finally in *Landscape and Antiquity: Aspects of English Culture at Stourhead* (Oxford 1970). Ronald Paulson elaborated further in *Emblem and Expression* (1975).⁴ The associations with the *Aeneid* now at once brought to mind Christian exegesis which traditionally interpreted Aeneas’s journey as ‘a parable of the Christian soul’s journey through life’, and Stourhead’s circuit walk thus became a Christianized pagan allegory culminating in celestial wisdom (the Temple of Apollo). Paulson felt confident enough to summarize Henry Hoare’s inner thoughts: ‘Here the City merchant builds his new Troy; leaving behind him the squalid battle and din of burning Troy, he settles on this sacred soil, works his crops, or lets the flowers grow unmolested, withstands temptations, and founds an empire (a family) that will last as long as Rome and share its virtues and glories’.⁵ With such authority behind him Max F. Schulz has now gone even further. He sees Stourhead potentially as an emblem of the Fall of Man imaginatively redeemed:

To fantasize that by such a circumferential walk one turned an earthly garden into a new paradise is, of course, to dismiss the anticipatoriness of the Christian promise, is to condense some future eternity to an immediate and present experience. Furthermore, such fantasizing ingeniously

² Kenneth Woodbridge, ‘The Sacred Landscape: Painters and the Lake Garden of Stourhead’, *Apollo*, LXXXVIII, 1968, pp. 210–14. See also his ‘The Dream of Aeneas: A Rosa Source for Cheere’s River God at Stourhead’, *Burlington Magazine*, CXVI, 1974, p. 756.

³ Edward Malins, *English Landscape and Literature 1660–1840*, London 1966; Christopher Hussey, *English Gardens and Landscapes 1700–1750*, London 1967.

⁴ Ronald Paulson, *Emblem and Expression: Meaning in English Art of the Eighteenth Century*, Cambridge, Mass.

1975, ch. 2. Compare his former position which emphasized multiplicity of viewpoint in ‘The Pictorial Circuit & Related Structures in 18th-Century England’, in Peter Hughes and David Williams eds, *The Varied Pattern: Studies in the 18th Century*, Toronto 1971, pp. 165–87.

⁵ *Emblem and Expression*, n. 4 above, p. 30.

assumes that a reversal of the Fall can be brought about by the sheer fact of one's activities in a garden.⁶

Clearly a great deal has been built by accretion on Woodbridge's foundations. Before any more rhetoric is spun from the looms of fantasy it is time to enquire what solid ground exists for seeing Stourhead as second Troy, a parallel of the Christian soul and a redemptive Eden in the West. First some sceptical objections will be made, then an alternative interpretation will be offered.

Little time need be wasted on the high-flying balloons of Christian parable and the Fall reversed. By whatever other means a visitor to Stourhead might take off in that way, it cannot be done by Henry Hoare's Virgil. Not one shred of evidence has been offered by Paulson or Schulz to substantiate the view that late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century readers of the *Aeneid* interpreted it in terms of medieval Christian exegesis. It has not been offered because it does not exist. Compare, on the contrary, in France, le Bossu, René Rapin, de Segrays, or even a wild man like Charles Perrault. In England French tradition is followed by Dryden and Trapp as Virgilian translators and most importantly for Stourhead in the Pitt/Warton version and commentaries.⁷

For Henry Hoare's generation the *Aeneid* was read as a political poem. Its function was to reconcile the Romans to the loss of liberty under the hands of the absolute ruler Augustus, and by showing a wise and religious lawgiver in Aeneas to flatter the Emperor to imitation. The argument is several times repeated in the Pitt/Warton commentaries with frequent reference to contemporary critical tradition.⁸ This commonplace determines the signification of Alfred's Tower in the landscape of Stourhead, and will be taken up again in that context. It has nothing to do with Christian parables, or, *a fortiori*, even less with the romantic and revolutionary idea that through nature and pagan virtue Man might found another Paradise. That matter will be considered again in relation to Stourhead Church, in the grounds of which it can be decently interred.

Paulson's and Schulz's undocumented and unsubstantiable hypotheses are different matter from Woodbridge's more modest, sensible and scrupulously presented evidence

⁶ Max F. Schulz, 'The Circuit Walk of the Eighteenth-Century Landscape Garden and the Pilgrim's Circuitous Progress', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, xv, 1981, p. 10 referring to Paulson. Yet another variant on the *Aeneid* programme is offered by James Turner, 'The Structure of Henry Hoare's Stourhead', *Art Bulletin*, LXI, 1979, pp. 68–77. He chooses an earlier circuit of the garden and, commencing the lake walk at the grotto, unites classic and gothic in a programme 'provided by the first book of the *Aeneid*' and ingeniously trumps Woodbridge's ace. Since I do not accept the premise I cannot discuss the 'structure'.

⁷ René le Bossu, *Traité du Poème épique*, Paris 1675; René Rapin, *Comparaison des poèmes d'Homère et de Virgile* Paris 1664; Jean Regnaud de Segrays, *Eneïde*, Paris 1668; Charles Perrault, *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes*, Paris 1688. Dryden's translation of the *Aeneid* with a long critical introduction appeared in 1700, Joseph Trapp's in 1718–20 and the Christopher Pitt/Joseph Warton version in 1753. Woodbridge notes the relevance of Pitt's translation in *Landscape and Antiquity*, p. 20. Studies of critical approaches to Virgil at the time

include T. W. Harrison, 'English Virgil: *The Aeneid* in the XVIII Century', *Philologica Pragensia*, x, pp. 1–11, 80–91; R. D. Williams, 'Changing Attitudes to Virgil, a study in the history of taste from Dryden to Tennyson' in D. R. Dudley ed., *Virgil: Studies in Latin Literature and its Influence*, London 1969, pp. 119–38; my own 'What God, What Mortal? the *Aeneid* and English Mock-Heroic', *Arion*, viii, 1969, pp. 359–79 and 'Baroque Virgil: Joseph Trapp's *Aeneid*', *Proceedings of the Virgil Society*, xii, 1972–73, pp. 1–10. Paulson's appeal is to medieval exegesis (no longer significant) and 'the metaphors of Puritan devotional literature' (allegorical, but not Virgilian). Schulz follows him.

⁸ In addition to the Anglo-French tradition cited n. 7 see Pitt/Warton, I, p. vi, 'of the *Aeneid* . . . as Mr Pope was used frequently to say, it was evidently as much a party piece, as *Absalom and Archithophel*', and Joseph Spence, 'The poem may very well be considered as a work merely political', I, p. 19. All quotations are from Christopher Pitt and Joseph Warton, *The Works of Virgil*, 3rd edn, 4 vols, London 1778.

which fed them. But even some of this evidence begins to look less secure if sceptically reviewed. Of course Henry Hoare had Virgil in his mind, but did he have only Virgil there? Do even the clearest allusions constitute a programme? A few points are offered *seriatim*.

Let us accept the supposition that an eighteenth-century visitor would have recalled Claude's *Coast View of Delos with Aeneas* (Pl. 18a) on entering the garden. If he possessed such remarkably precise powers of recall then the Pantheon/Temple of Hercules across the lake would be incorrectly associated with Apollo, or Latona/Diana (*Aeneid* III). In the circuit walks *Aeneid* VI would then precede III because of the inscription above the temple of Ceres/Flora. The grotto inscription would then intermit *Aeneid* I, while the river god inside the grotto (Pl. 20a), if read as Father Tiber, would recall Book VIII, whereas the steep ascent from the grotto should recall Avernus from Book VI. Nothing is in the right order. Even allowing for the eclectic powers of associationism this is a very odd programme. Moreover, what is Father Tiber doing in hell and why should either image recall Aeneas landing on the coast of Africa?

But perhaps the grotto is not Avernus? The tag *facilis descensus Averno*, on which so much depends, is not inscribed in the garden at all, but is only a sportive reference in a private letter about an unidentified 'Sousterrain' in 1765. The late date of the letter initially led Woodbridge to identify the 'Sousterrain' with the rocky tunnel under the road below the temple of Apollo which leads one out of the garden. (The date is right for works at that end of the circuit.) Only subsequently in 'The Sacred Landscape' and *Landscape and Antiquity* did the iconographic argument replace the archaeological and the phrase was transferred to the grotto. From these sources Paulson accepted merely convenient speculation as fact.

Further, the river god is certainly not Father Tiber from *Aeneid* VIII. Colt Hoare in his *History of Modern Wiltshire* quotes the inscription for the god (p. 66):

Haec domus, haec sedes, haec sunt penetralia magni Amnis; in hoc residens facto de cantibus antro Undis jura dabat, nymphisque colentibus undas

which clearly identifies the grotto with the cave of Peneus, father of Daphne of *Metamorphoses* I, 574 ff.⁹

It is equally probable that Ovid, not Virgil, would have come to mind on entering the garden. *Metamorphoses* XIII is as likely an origin for Claude's scene as *Aeneid* III. Likewise the famous painterly image has more than one source. The Temple which recalls the Pantheon in the *Coast View of Delos with Aeneas* (Pl. 18a) is not perceived across a stretch of water as at Stourhead. For that image one must turn to the same painter's *Landscape with Egeria mourning over Numa* (Pl. 19a) to which Woodbridge first drew attention as part of a composite source in 'The Sacred Landscape'. Since Egeria entertained Numa in a grotto, and since the grotto at Stourhead is a nymphaeum, quite another train of allusion could be started. All that need be suggested at this juncture is that the undoubted Claudian image may be general rather than precise both in pictorial source and in potential reference.

Finally, Flora, Ceres, Nymphs, River Gods, Hercules and Apollo are all classic commonplaces and may be linked to quite other subjects than the *Aeneid*. So Georgina

⁹ Woodbridge cites the evidence, 'Henry Hoare's Paradise', p. 98, n. 136 (see n. 1 above) and admits that 'This would seem to contradict the *Aeneid* theory', but then proceeds with his argument sustained by a remark

of Horace Walpole that there were lines from Virgil under the River God. But Walpole's memory was probably at fault.

Masson has found convincing parallels with Pliny's account of the source of the Clitumnus.¹⁰ What Stourhead lacks is any clear reference, visual or verbal, to the founding of Rome. There is no image of Romulus, no thatched hut, no public figure from Roman history who might recall the moral and political state which Aeneas established, and which is Virgil's subject in the opinion of the age. Compare the specific references of the Elysian fields at Stowe in the comparison of Ancient and Modern Virtue across the waters of the Styx. But even Stowe, with its clear images and telling inscriptions, is not concerned with building 'a new Troy'. Does anyone construct a garden to emblemize the founding of a city? It is a contradiction in terms.

The programme which modern scholarship has invented, therefore, must be abandoned. Let us walk around the garden again enlightened by Woodbridge's scholarship but with a more open associationism. What vistas are related? Why, especially, in the circuit of the garden did Henry Hoare incorporate views into the English countryside outside the classical scene? When precise inscription is offered, in what way might an eighteenth-century mind have interpreted the text, and what is the range and limit of allusion?

To begin again with Claude. Any educated visitor of the age would appreciate that the garden is like a living picture and that the invitation is to walk back in time into idealized antiquity alive here, now, in England. No visitor of the time has left upon record remembrance of either of the Claude paintings which undoubtedly shaped Henry Hoare's visual imagination. Such recondite allusion would be unusual in eighteenth-century gardens and suggests rather the mysteries of some hermetic Renaissance group of cognoscenti. None the less if either, or both, the paintings were recalled, associations with Aeneas, Apollo, the nymph Egeria and King Numa might be generally invoked, and further potential allusion might be subsequently found in the garden. Equally important, and hitherto unremarked because not understood, both paintings contain in the background a mysterious distant tower. Such a tower is also associated with the garden at Stourhead — Alfred's tower — but set outside the classical circuit (Pl. 21a). Henry Hoare's inscription tells why, and will be considered in due place. But the preoccupation with Claude has confused the clear with the recondite. The most obvious visual allusion at once recalls the most famous building of Roman antiquity. What the visitor first sees across the lake is the Pantheon, a temple built, it was believed, by Augustus's marshal Agrippa, and now seen, as if by magic, within the green world of the English countryside, and strangely unapproachable across a divide of waters. Some might recall a precise allusion to works by Claude, but everyone would perceive the reference to the Augustan temple. The primary association, therefore, is with the natural religion of the ancients. The Pantheon is in the pantheistic setting of a garden. The same effect, less iconographically rich, may be seen in Aislaby's temple of Piety seen across the moon ponds at Studley Royal. Nature is the source of Roman *pietas*.

Two other associations seem obvious and appropriate. One is with the supposed date of the Pantheon: the visitor will recall the *pax Augusta*. The other is with the Palladian villa of Henry Hoare from which, as a fortunate guest, the visitor has come. Both house and temple share the same portico motif (Pls 18b, 21b), thus illustrating Palladio's famous claim that such was the practice of antiquity. This establishes a moral as well as architectural link. Henry Hoare, in his Palladian house, has established his claim to

¹⁰ 'The Sacred Landscape', n. 5 (see n. 2 above).

preserve the finest traditions of Roman antiquity. We see the connection across the lake and mirrored in its waters.¹¹

The first image of the garden therefore establishes as its central motifs natural religion and Augustan peace and invites one to consider the relation between the ancients' virtues idealistically portrayed and the virtues of a modern patrician. Such parallelism may be found at Stowe. But at Stourhead the relation between past and present is essentially dialectical, as will be shown. Failure to understand the dialectic has led our own times astray.

The first inscription in the garden follows as we follow the dexterous pathway. It is appropriately a religious demand: *Procul, o procul este profani*, and is upon the temple of Flora (occasionally known as the temple of Ceres (Pl. 19b)).¹² This quotation has been an essential prop for the programmatic reading of the garden in relation to the *Aeneid* and long contextual passages have been deployed around it.

Although no limits can be placed to the free play of association in a garden which demands the exercise of the imagination, yet Henry Hoare seems to have taken steps to block certain kinds of development. The words in the *Aeneid* are spoken by a prophetic sybil raving in a cavern. It is an enthusiastic utterance. But there is no cave at Stourhead nor any swollen prophet. Instead we find a simple temple of the goddess of the flowers. This is not a garden of enthusiastic religion, and it would be most inappropriate for the visitor to think of the lovely waters of an English lake as similar to Virgil's Avernus:

Deep, deep, a cavern lies, devoid of light,
All rough with rocks, and horrible to sight;
Its dreadful mouth is fenc'd with subtle floods,
And the brown horrors of surrounding woods.
From its black jaws such baleful vapours rise,
Blot the bright day, and blast the golden skies,
That not a bird can stretch her pinions there
Through the thick poisons and incumber'd air,
But struck by death her flagging pinions cease;
And hence Aörnus was it called by Greece.

The lines are from the Pitt/Warton Virgil, VI, 332–41. That edition is cited because it provides the one possible means by which a Virgilian programme might be reconstituted for the garden, for there, in Warburton's essay upon the Eleusinian mysteries, it is argued that the quotation *Procul, o procul este profani* is an allusion to the entry to the mysteries and is associated with the temple of Ceres. Ingenuity might extract something from that. But Henry Hoare's rejection of Flitcroft's designation of the temple as that of Ceres, and the emergence of the shrine as dedicated to Flora, might well suggest, on the other hand, that he denied an attempt at that kind of programme. The garden is no more mysterious than it is enthusiastic.¹³

¹¹ The latter part of the argument is generally accepted, see 'Henry Hoare's Paradise', p. 87, and n. 27 (see n. 1 above).

¹² Flitcroft's name for the temple. Idem, p. 93.

¹³ Pitt/Warton, III, 11 ff. 'Near Eleusis, there was a well called Callichorus; and, adjoining to that, a *stone*, on which, as the tradition went, Ceres sat down, sad and weary, on her coming to Eleusis. Hence the stone was

named *Alegustus*, the *melancholy stone*. On which account it was deemed unlawful for the initiated to sit thereon.' Anyone wishing to develop an interpretation of Stourhead in the light of Warburton's essay will need to take into account that his views are adversely criticized even in this edn of Virgil, and a contemporary standard edn such as Ruæus's 'Delphin' is a salutary check to speculation in its robust common sense.

Who then are the profane who should keep away? Why is the inscription upon a shrine dedicated to flowers above a spring of fertile waters? Obviously there is a relation to natural religion. We are seeking to approach the Pantheon through the beauties of idealized nature. In the context of eighteenth-century gardens it is a probable association also that the profane are those who see nature in terms of sensuality or libertinism. There is no need to elaborate upon the topos of the garden as the scene of sexual love. An itinerant visitor of other gardens of the age would recollect the goddess Venus at Castle Howard in Hawksmoor's domed rotunda in Wray Wood, the Vale of Venus at Kent's Rousham, and especially, and most sensually, at Stowe the temples of Venus and Bacchus, the Cave of Dido, the busts of Nero, Vespasian, Cleopatra and Faustina (the darker aspects of *The Parliament of Fowls* come to mind). There are no such allusions at Stourhead. (On the contrary the grounds contain a Mount of Diana, and Venus and an attendant satyr are shown excluded from the Pantheon.) Is not this, not Aeneas's sybil, the appropriate context for warning the profane to absent themselves from the garden?¹⁴

Hence the nymph of the grot, the next ornament, is a draped female figure (Pl. 20c). Her inscription invites us not to love, but to drink or bathe silently in her sacred spring:

Nymph of the grot these sacred waters I keep
And to the murmur of these waters sleep;
Ah! spare my slumbers, gently tread the cave,
And drink in silence or in silence lave.

The obvious association of this cave, with its initial inscription: *Nympharum domus*, is with the belief of the ancients in the *genius loci*, here chastely considered. The nymph and the river god glimpsed beyond are self-evidently appropriate for a garden celebrating the rise of the river Stour. It is tempting to perceive an association with Egeria and her grotto which precise allusion to Claude might recall from the entrance to the garden,¹⁵ but as for the proposal that the grotto represents hell to which the descent is easy, that is manifestly absurd. We cannot have both, and the spot is delightful.

Yet those delights are not unqualified. Preoccupation with non-existent programmes and fantasized parables has led to complete neglect of two major things perceived in the grotto. The first is the sudden burst of light upon the left hand where the wall of the grotto is cut away and one looks back across the lake to the entrance to the garden (Pl. 21c). The alternative vista *out* of the garden is as important as the Claudian view *in*. The signification of the vista must wait for fuller discussion when the walk reaches the Pantheon. Let the view back at this moment suggest no more than something left behind on entering, something one should remember. This nymph of the grot, however attractive, is lost in slumber and should not be wakened. Consider the emblem in Spenserian terms and her natural beauty is not an unqualified good.

Hence the posture of the river god at the far end of the grotto (Pl. 20a). He has one arm dramatically raised. With the other he is pouring forth water from an urn. It is a traditional icon. One thinks of the water spilling from the urn in Poussin's *Et in Arcadia Ego*. Horace Walpole at once thought of an appropriate motto:

This Stream, like Time, still hastens from my Urn
For ever rolling, never to return.

¹⁴ A specific architectural allusion may be intended to the Painshill Temple of Bacchus, which would strengthen the argument that Henry Hoare was correcting his contemporaries.

¹⁵ Diana turned her into a spring because disturbed by her lamentations for Numa. The allusion is appropriate.

Is it fanciful, therefore, to see that raised arm as an admonition? (So Woodbridge sees Tiber.) We should not ourselves sleep under the earth with the natural but pagan nymph of the place. The figure with the urn, and the glimpse back into the light from whence we came, both are warnings.

Admittedly this interpretation is open to the same objection as that made to the imaginative flights of Paulson and Schulz. Precise documentation cannot be provided. More modestly, therefore, let us consider the Ovidian quotation already given which associates the river god specifically with Peneus, father of Daphne, and hence with a pervasive theme of this garden: Chastity. George Sandys glossed the tale thus:

Daphne is changed into a never-withering tree, to shew what immortall honour a virgin obtaines by preserving her chastity. She is said to be the daughter of *Peneus*, because the banks of that river abound with laurel; to be beloved of *Apollo*, in that the fairest grew about his Temple of *Delphos*; to fly his pursuit, in that they affect the shadow; and to repell the fire of lust, in not being scorched by the Sunne nor Lightning.¹⁶

At the same time, more remotely, Sandys noted that Ovid by allusion to the laurel complimented the family of the Caesars generally and Augustus in particular.

These are themes already established in the garden: Apollo at Delphos, Augustan Rome, chastity. Sandys's gloss upon Ovid seems an entirely appropriate associative elaboration upon the image of Peneus as genius of the river Stour. If so, just as the sleeping nymph in her eternal natural repose suggests something attractive but imperfect, so too we are reminded that even the God Apollo (suggested in the Claudean view at the entrance, and with his own temple within the garden) was not ideal in all his manifestations. The force of this criticism becomes apparent as one emerges into the full light of day and comes to the Pantheon.

The visitor finds Agrippa's Augustan shrine dedicated as the temple of Hercules. The interpretations placed upon this shrine by Woodbridge and Paulson are locally correct (it is pleasant to acknowledge a major area of common ground) but are out of context. The association of Hercules with the most famous monument of Augustan Rome appropriately reminds the visitor that he was worshipped in that city as *communis deus* (*Aeneid* viii, 275). It would be surprising too if the eighteenth-century visitor would forget the commonplace Renaissance identification of the hero's labours as representing a compendium of civic virtue. There would seem to be also a clear allusion to the Choice of Hercules, a matter on which Paulson is sensitive and perceptive in his description. On the hero's right hand a steep pathway leads up a hillside to the Apolline temple of virtue as a manifestation of celestial wisdom as seen by the Ancients. The vice rejected was traditionally represented by an alluring woman: the choice of the profane which the enlightened visitor likewise put aside on entering the garden.

Such elaboration upon earlier argument misses the context of the Pantheon, however. What most strikes the eye, and what is self-evidently of the utmost emblematic significance, is the view out from the approach to the Pantheon which is the counterpart of the original Claudean vista which struck the eye coming in. It is the second time one has looked back at the entrance to the garden, but this is now not a glimpse through an opening in the wall of the grotto, but a fully clear and sustained image. Again one sees a

¹⁶ Ovid's *Metamorphosis Englished, Mythologiz'd, and Represented in Figures*, Oxford 1632.

temple across water and embowered in trees. It is not an emblem of natural religion, and its form is not classical. The form is Gothic, and the building is the Church of the true God of the Christian revealed religion. That God, like the deity of the ancients, exists in relation to nature, and is difficult of access from the Pantheon. Like the Pantheon too the Church is associated with civic qualities. Before it stands the market cross of the city of Bristol, representative of the piety of the mercantile class of free British burgesses (Pl. 20d).

The introduction of Christian imagery at this crucial point makes nonsense of the argument that the classical garden at Stourhead reverses the Fall. The question posed is what relation exists between the civic virtues and natural piety of the ancients idealized, and the Christian revealed religion? The relationship I suggest is dialectical rather than parallel. Compare Stowe. There the Temple of Ancient Virtue and the Shrine of Modern British Worthies are parallel for they are architecturally linked — both are classical — joined by the figure of Mercury — who will fly from one to the other — and are part of the same programme — they are both within the garden circuit. But at Stourhead contraries are emphasized. There are two different kinds of architecture — Classic and Gothic. The buildings are separated by the expanse of water. One building is within the circuit of the classical garden, the other outside it: hence there are two different cities, one Augustan Rome the other mercantile and British, and, likewise, two conceptions of the deity, one natural, the other revealed.

This is not a 'rejection' of classical culture. It would be absurd to claim that the moral of the garden walk is to reject the garden. The moral rather is Christian humanism. But Henry Hoare seems to have been firm in his determination to emphasize virtues outside the classical world which must qualify natural ideology.

Consider finally, therefore, the ascent to the Temple of Apollo (Pl. 19c). Let the visitor properly grant that this represents the Choice of Hercules, that the pathway he climbs is a sign of the ascent to celestial wisdom, and that there is too, as with the Pantheon, a political dimension to such piety, for Apollo was associated with the Palatine hill and the loftiest aspirations of the Augustan sun king. Yet the limits of that vision have been made apparent. From this eminence one contemplates the whole circuit of the garden, but from this eminence Henry Hoare constructed the 'Sousterrain' to which the tag in his letter of 1765 properly refers: *Facilis descensus Averno*. It is easy to fall from this eminence, whether one thinks civically of the fall of Rome, or morally of classical philosophy. Apollo is present in two forms in this garden, here, on the eminence in his loftiest manifestation, below, in the grotto alluded to in the attempted rape of Daphne.

Such argument runs the risk of elaborating more than is merited from a casual remark in a letter. Free association must be replaced by more clearly documented allusion. A second vista outside the garden is apparent from the hill of Apollo. The mysterious tower (Pl. 21a), common to both the Claudian images which inspired Stourhead, comes clearly into sight behind the Pantheon and raised upon an eminence. It is upon an alternative axis which links via an obelisk close to Henry Hoare's villa back to the house itself. This is Alfred's Tower. The architectural style is Gothic. It is equivalent to the Temple of Liberty at Stowe which is likewise Gothic.

Woodbridge records one version of the inscription:

In memory of Alfred the Great, The Founder of the English Monarchy, The 1st encourager of Learning He founded the University of Oxford. The Giver of most excellent Laws, Jurys, the Bulwark of English Liberty. He instituted a *well regulated Militia*, divided England into Shires or

Countys & by a determined courage & unwearied attention to the increase of our Naval Force protected us from Foreign Invasions & extended our Trade to the remote parts of The Globe. He was the complete Model of that perfect Character, which, under the Name of a Sage, the Philosophers have been fond of delineating, rather as a fiction of Their imagination, than in hopes of ever seeing it reduced to practice.

Britons will revere the Ashes of that Monarch by whose Lessons They have (under the protection of Divine Providence) subdued Their Enemys this year with invincible Force by Land & Sea, in Europe, Asia, Africa & America, stopd the Effusions of human blood & given peace & rest to the Earth . . . 1762.¹⁷

This tower enunciates Augustan motifs, especially in its reference to ‘stopd the Effusion of human blood & given peace & rest to the Earth’. Unfortunately, failure to understand Virgil once again has led to misinterpretation. Insistence upon a framework derived from the *Aeneid* provides the wrong context. ‘Alfred was, of course, the successor of Augustus and “the Father of His People”’ just as Brutus another Trojan was the founder of the British race — so the argument hitherto has gone.

But Alfred is a West Saxon monarch, a local hero, and has nothing historically to do with the founding of Celtic Britain. More importantly the significance of the relation of the Gothic emblems outside the garden has once again been missed. One must return to the eighteenth-century interpretation of the *Aeneid* as a poem intended to reconcile the Romans to the loss of liberty:

The Romans having lost the virtue and honesty of their ancestors, liberty could not in the nature of things long survive. They began to be profligate, and to be slaves. As they had not virtue enough to be free, and since they must needs have fallen into the hands of one governor, the happiest circumstance they could meet with, was undoubtedly that this one governor should be a mild one, and bind the chains with a tender hand.¹⁸

It is well known that the age provides other characterizations of Augustus less ‘tender’, as ‘tyrant’, or ‘blood-thirsty vindictive Usurper’, for instance. Even Pope in his ‘Epistle to Augustus’ contrasted ‘the Happiness of a *Free People*’ with the Augustan ‘Encrease of an *Absolute Empire*’.¹⁹ Thus, the reason for placing the Gothic tower outside the classical garden, is to distinguish between Ancient and Modern Augustanism. The form is Gothic as at Stowe because this is a declaration of Whig adherence to the famous Anglo-Saxon ‘ancient constitution’ of the realm to which the enemies of Stuart absolutism had appealed.²⁰ The Gothic tower praises Alfred as ‘the Bulwark of English Liberty’ (compare the *Aeneid*), and hence the founder of trial by jury, and an enemy of standing armies. The modern ‘Father of His People’ does not ‘Encrease an Absolute Empire’ but free from foreign invasion ‘extended our Trade to the remote parts of The Globe’. This is a standard motif for poems like Dryden’s *Annus Mirabilis* or Pope’s *Windsor Forest*.

¹⁷ *Landscape and Antiquity*, p. 55 (see n. 7 above).

¹⁸ Pitt/Warton, II, pp. 3–4.

¹⁹ The matter is fully documented in my ‘Augustus and Pope’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, xxxix, 1976, pp. 117–31. A more general study is Howard D. Weinbrot’s *Augustus Caesar in ‘Augustan’ England*, Princeton 1978. See also James William Johnson, ‘The Meaning of Augustan’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, xix, 1958, pp. 507–22; Howard Erskine-Hill, ‘Augustans on Augustanism: England 1655–1759’, *Renaissance and Modern Studies*, xi, 1967, pp. 55–83, and more generally

James William Johnson, *The Formation of English Neo-Classical Thought*, Princeton 1967; Addison Ward, ‘The Tory View of Roman History’, *Studies in English Literature*, xiv, 1964, pp. 431–46; and my own ‘*Imperious Caesar, dead and turn’d to clay*’, Cardiff 1977. Howard Erskine-Hill’s cumulative study, at the time of writing, nears completion.

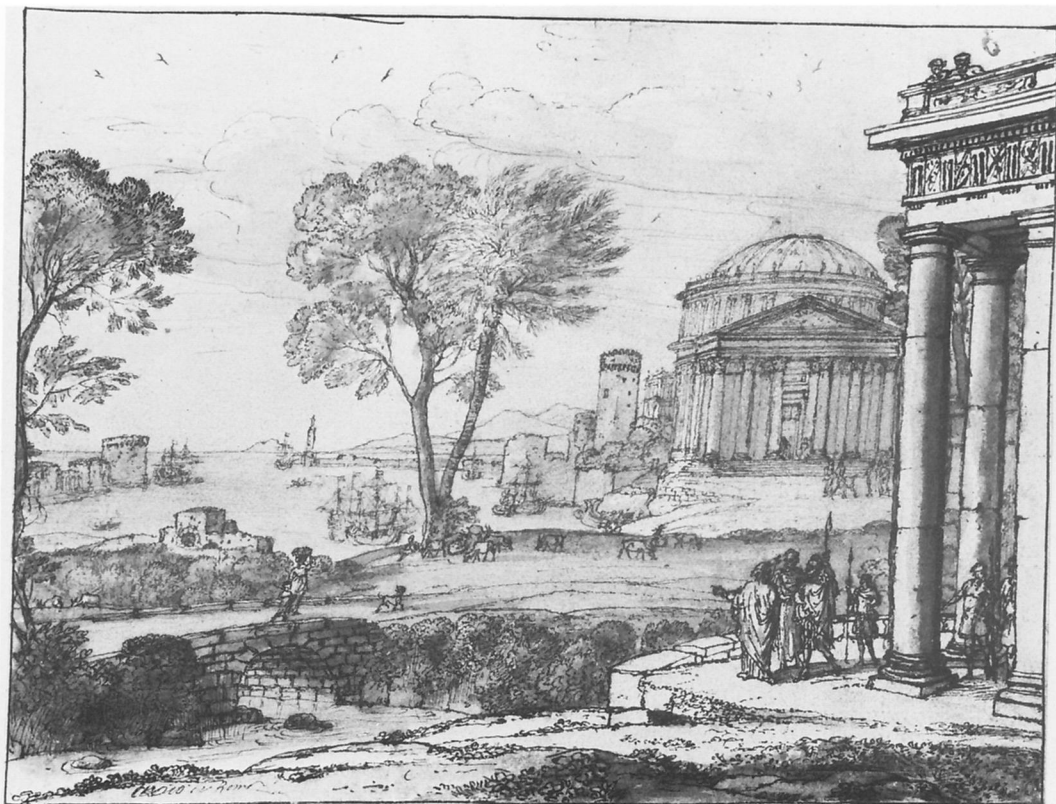
²⁰ See John Greville Agard Pocock, *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law*, Cambridge 1957, and Zera S. Fink, *The Classical Republicans*, Evanston, Illinois 1945.

Likewise Alfred as a modern and civic sage, such as the philosophers had only imagined, has his monument outside and beyond the classic Elysium. The tower counterpoints the Apolline temple just as the church and market cross are set in juxtaposition to the Pantheon. They too are acknowledgements of 'Divine Providence'. Hence the dedication as finally inscribed on the tower calls Alfred 'Christian' as well as philosopher.²¹ So Henry Hoare's Palladian villa stands outside his classical 'paradise' garden though related to it. One further source of inscriptional interpretation must finally be cited of Stourhead as a moral and religious emblem. It is surprising that a critical tradition concerned with 'Christian parable' and 'the Christian promise' should not have examined the most obvious source of such ideas within Henry Hoare's general scheme. Much has been made of the Virgilian inscription in the garden. Why suppress what was written in the church? There is no reason to suppose that the creator of the garden did not subscribe to the articles of religion recorded there which tell of a greater creator than he and another garden echoed only by Elysium.

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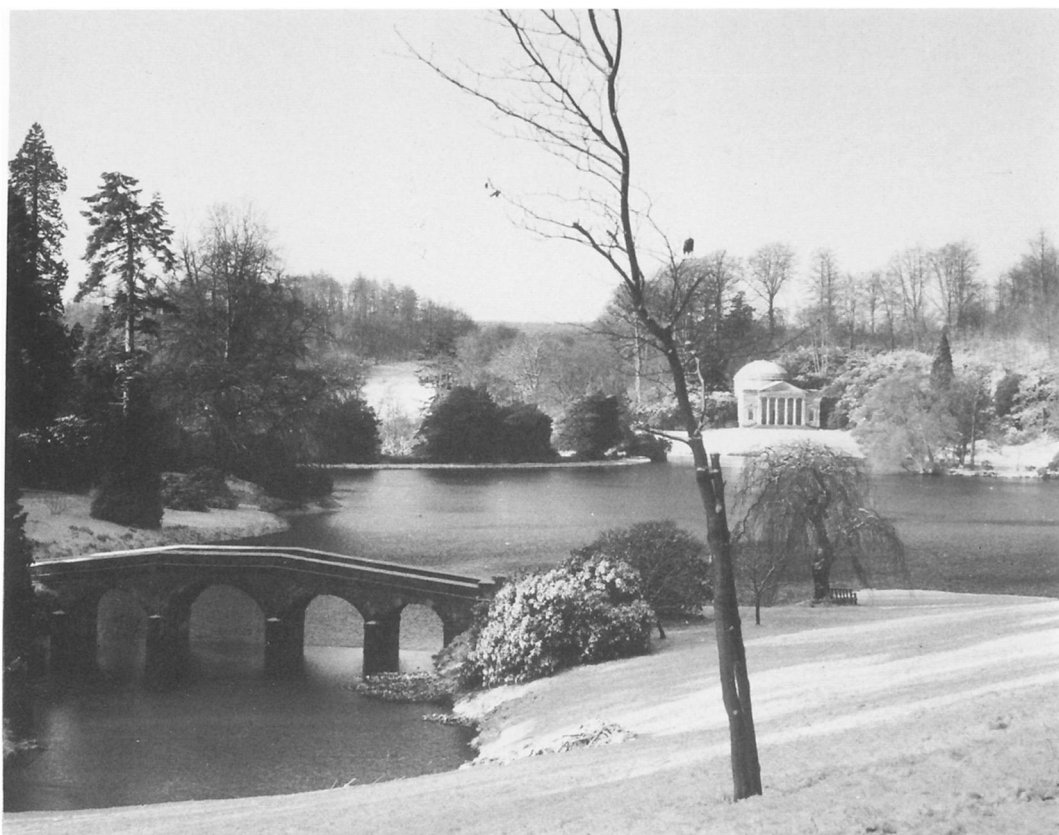
²¹ The inscription on the monument reads, 'Alfred the Great|A.D. 879 on this summit|Erected his standard against the Danish Invaders|To Him we owe|The origin of Juries|The Establishment of a Militia|the

Creation of a Naval Force|Alfred the light of a benighted age|was a Philosopher and a Christian|The Father of his People|The Founder of the English | Monarchy and Liberty'.



Permission British Library

a—Claude Lorrain, *Coast Scene of Delos with Aeneas*, from *Liber Veritatis* (pp. 133–36)



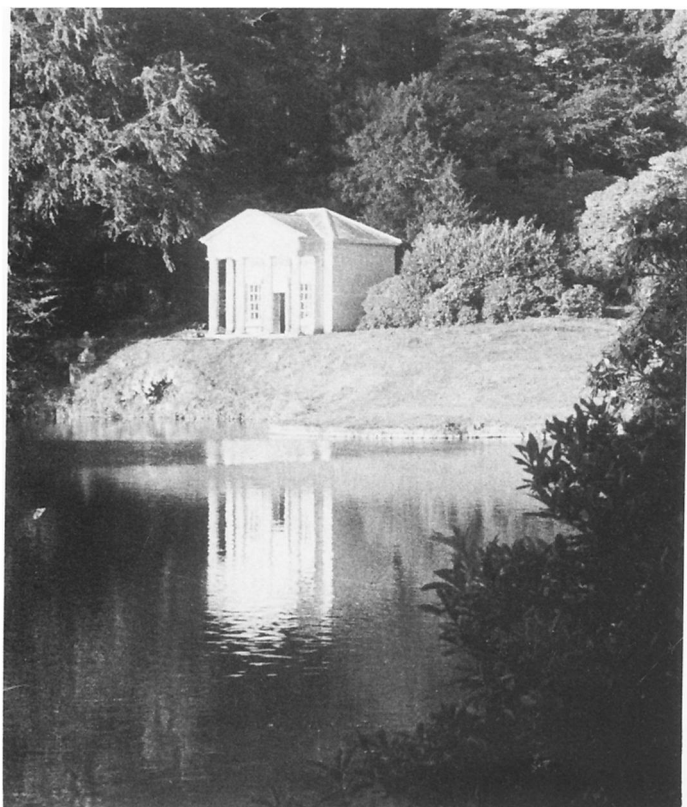
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b—Vista of garden, Stourhead (pp. 134, 137)



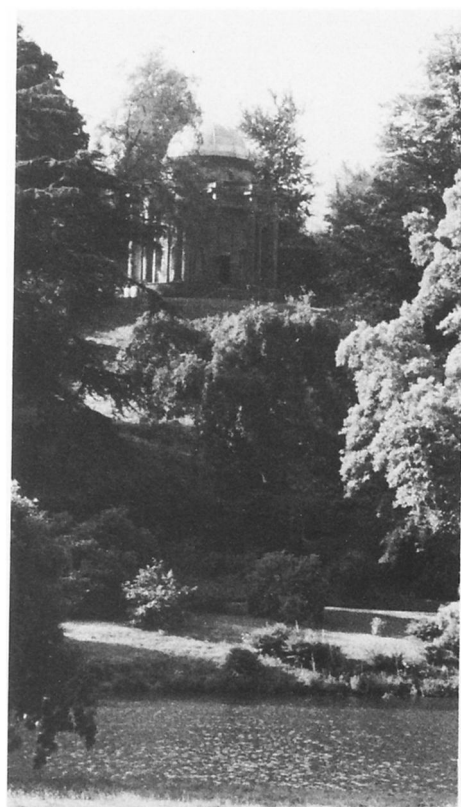
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a—Claude Lorrain, *Landscape with the nymph Egeria mourning over Numa*, from *Liber Veritatis* (p. 136)



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b—The Temple of Flora, Stourhead (pp. 134, 138)

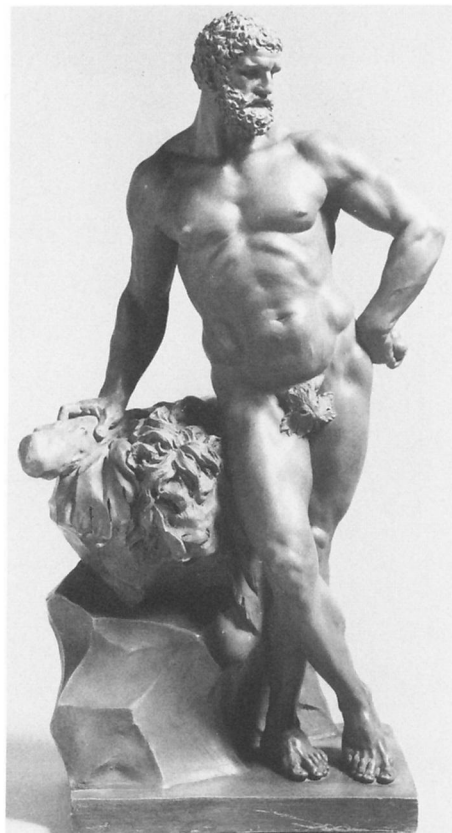


Permission Kenneth Woodbridge

c—The Temple of Apollo, Stourhead (p. 141)



a—The River God in the grotto, Stourhead (*pp.* 134, 136, 139)



Permission Robin Wright

b—Hercules in the Pantheon, Stourhead (*p.* 134)

a, c, d: *Permission Kenneth Woodbridge*

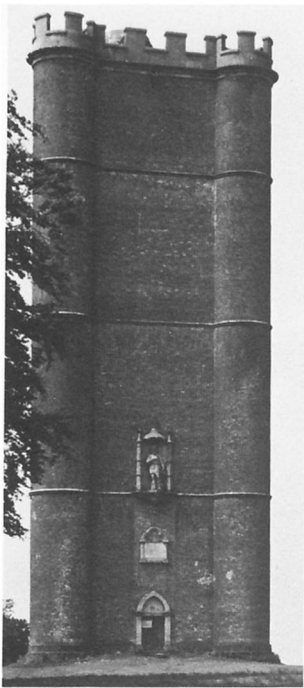
d—The Bristol Cross, Stourhead (*p.* 141)



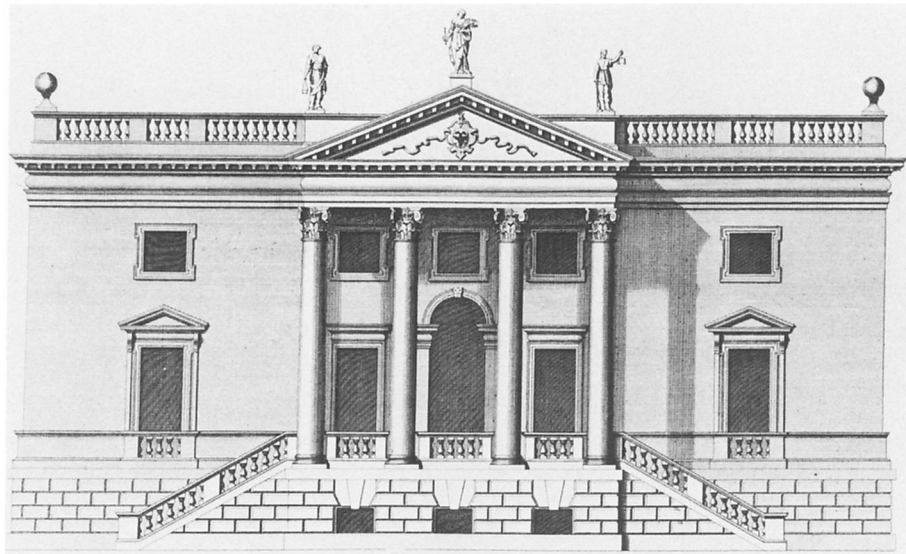
c—The nymph of the grotto, Stourhead (*p.* 139)



d

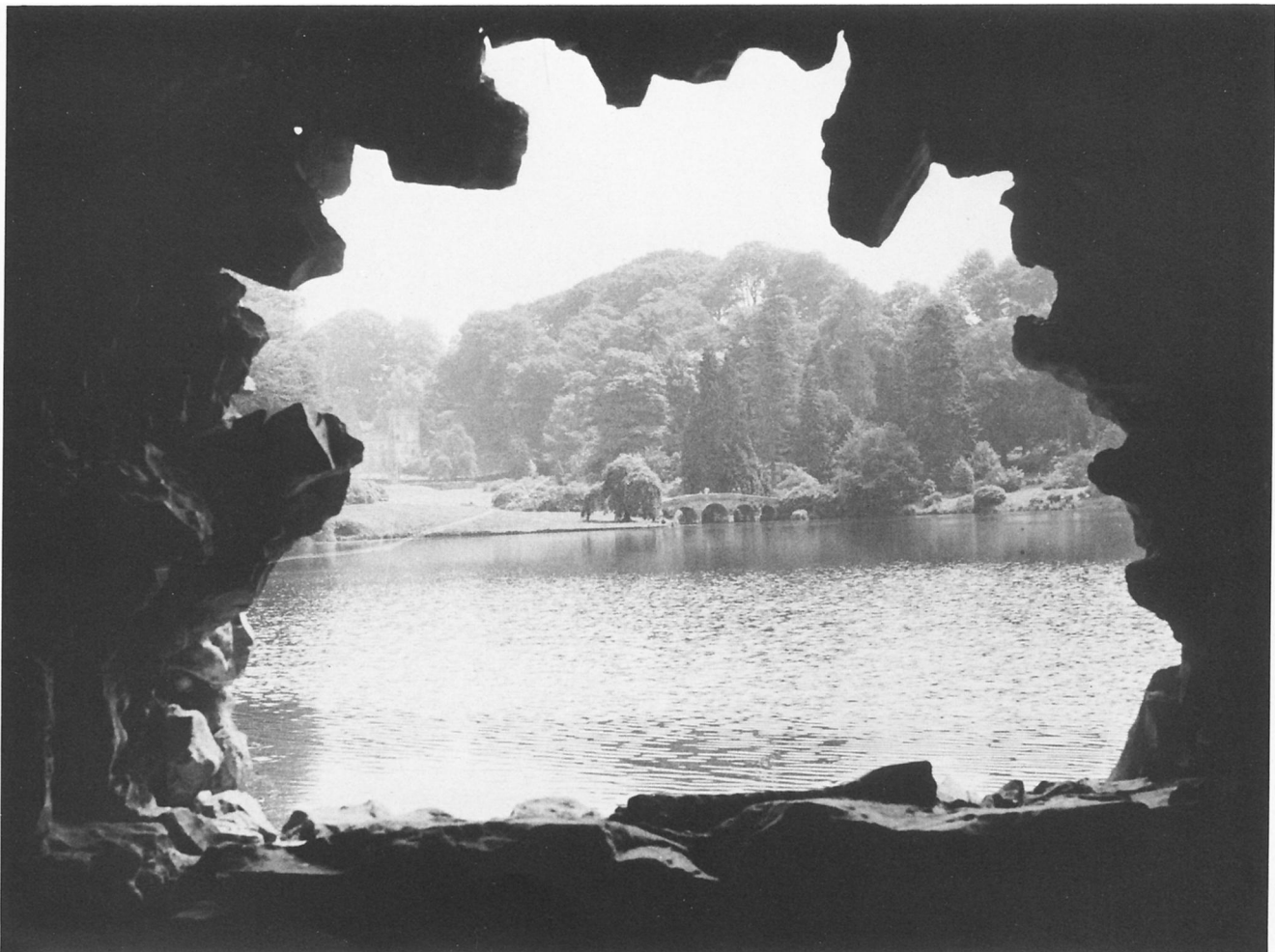


a. c. Permission Kenneth Woodbridge



b—Colin Campbell, original elevation for the east front of Stourhead, *Vitruvius Britannicus*, III, 1725 (p. 137)

a—Alfred's Tower, Stourhead (pp. 137, 141)



c—View of Stourhead church from the grotto (p. 139)